

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6741

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to the joint task force on the administration and delivery of services to children and families.

Brief Description: Regarding the joint task force on the administration and delivery of services to children.

Sponsors: Senators Stevens, Hargrove, Carrell, Brandland and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/20/06, 2/23/06 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Extends the reporting date for the Joint Task Force on the Administration and Delivery of Services to Children and Families (task force) to December 1, 2006.
- Adds to the membership of the task force a representative from the offices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Public Defender.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Kagi, Chair; Roberts, Vice Chair; Walsh, Ranking Minority Member; Hinkle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Darneille, Dickerson, Dunn, Haler and Pettigrew.

Staff: Sydney Forrester (786-7120).

Background:

In the 2005 session, the Legislature created the Joint Task Force on the Administration and Delivery of Services to Children and Families (task force). The task force was directed to study two main issues:

- (1) how best to ensure that an administrative structure has defined lines of responsibility for delivering services to children and families in need; and

- (2) the best means for the public to hold the government accountable for delivery of those services.

The task force met seven times between August and November 2005. A report from the task force was presented to the House Children and Family Services Committee in a work session on January 11, 2006.

The task force report makes three recommendations:

- (1) The task force should be granted an extension to meet for an additional 12 months to gather supplementary information before making final recommendations.
- (2) Membership of the task force should be enhanced to include a member representing the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Office of the Public Defender, and the Governor's Office.
- (3) A one-half full-time equivalent (FTE) staff or consultant position should be created and funded to provide support to the task force until final recommendations are submitted.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Certain recommendations of the task force are implemented. Two additional members are added representing the offices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Public Defender. Staff to the task force may include consultant services. The task force will submit a final report to the Legislature by December 1, 2006.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The provision devoting a one-half FTE to the task force is removed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) We do need to consider whether and how the administrative structure will support the culture change efforts in the Children's Administration. For over 10 years, various groups have looked at the issue of administrative structure but not from the perspective on how the structure impacts culture. This task force has broad representation from numerous experts and the various perspectives provided are tremendously helpful in exploring this issue. The task force has made significant progress in understanding the organizational structure, and we want to continue our work by considering how the structure impacts the culture changes that are needed.

Testimony Against: (Opposed) This task force is not necessary and is not going anywhere. The problems with the Children's Administration are not related to the administrative

structure. The problems are about culture of the work, the quality of people hired, and the quality of work done. The biggest problems are in the Bremerton office. We should not be spending time and money on this task force. We should be focusing on changing the culture instead. Task force meetings are not helpful. There should be a parent added to the task force.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Laurie Lippold, Children's Home Society; and Joanne Moore, Office of Public Defense.

(Opposed) David Wood and Stella Farias, Families United.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.